

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 21018 191658Z

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3098

S E C R E T PARIS 21018

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PFOR YN US

SUBJECT: US RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM

REF: STATE 177234

1. EMBOFF SAW DRV FIRST SECRETARY DO THANH AT 1600 JULY 19 AND TURNED OVER DEPARTMENT'S NOTE UNDER COVER OF EMBASSY NOTE, BOTH SHOWING JULY 19 DATE. WE TRANSMITTED THE NOTE EXACTLY AS RECEIVED, OMITTING THE USUAL COMPLIMENTARY OPENING (ALSO NOT CONTAINED IN THE DRV JUNE 19 NOTE) AND THE COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE (WHICH WAS CONTAINED IN THE DRV JUNE 19 NOTE).

2. AS USUAL DO THANH MADE NO OFFICIAL COMMENT, BUT SAID HE WOULD FORWARD THE NOTE EXPEDITIOUSLY TO HANOI. "UNOFFICIALLY" DO THANH SAID THAT IT LOOKED AS THOUGH THE US AND DRV POSITIONS WERE FAIRLY CLOSE ON THE PROCEDURES FOR TALKS SINCE WE ACCEPTED PARIS AS THE SITE AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TWO EMBASSIES AS INTERLOCUTORS. IT REMAINED NOW FOR THE DRV TO RESPOND TO THE PROPOSAL ABOUT THE LEVEL OF OUR REPRESENTATION AND THE PLACE FOR THE TALKS (DO THANH PERSONALLY THOUGHT THAT ALTERNATELY AT THE TWO EMBASSIES WOULD BE BETTER THAN THE US EMBASSY ONLY), AND TO PROPOSE A TIMING FOR THE TALKS. (EMBOFF GATHERED THAT THE IMPRESSIONS THE EMBASSY HERE HAS BEEN RECEIVING FROM HANOI IS THAT THE
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SECRET

PAGE 02 PARIS 21018 191658Z

SRV WOULD LIKE THEM TO BEGIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.)

3. DO THANH WAS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SUBSTANCE OF THE VIEWS WHICH EACH SIDE WOULD TAKE INTO THE CONVERSATIONS. THE SRY, ACCORDING TO THANH, WISHED TO MOVE TOWARD THE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS INCLUDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, BUT ITS KNOWN VIEW OF THE PROBLEMS STILL AT ISSUE BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES WAS VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE VIEWS CONCERNING MIA AND THE "US OBLIGATION UNDER ARTICLE 21" EXPRESSED IN OUR LATEST NOTE. THANH MUSED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF ARRIVING AT ANY AGREEMENT IF THE TWO SIDES WERE STILL SO FAR APART.

5. EMBASSY COMMENTS: ACCORDING TO DO THANH, TRAN HOAN, WHO IS DESCRIBED IN THE DIPLOMATIC LIST AS THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR, IS ACTUALLY FULFILLING THE ROLE OF MINISTER COUNSELOR. HOAN, WHO ARRIVED IN NOVEMBER 1975, WOULD BE THE NATURAL COUNTERPART OF THE DCM SHOULD HANOI CHOOSE TO HAVE HIM LEAD ITS DELEGATION. TRAN HOAN WAS APPARENTLY A MEMBER OF THE DRV DELEGATION IN 1968-69 AND ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THE LE DUC THO TALKS WITH DR. KISSINGER IN 1972 AND 1973. SINCE HIS ARRIVAL IN 1975 HE HAS NOT, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, BEEN INVOLVED WITH AMERICANS. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION WHICH WASHINGTON CAN PROVIDE ON TRAN HOAN.

6. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, I AM NOW CHARGE, AND WE PRESUME THAT IF HANOI SHOULD RESPOND FAVORABLY TO OUR NOTE, QUESTION OF LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION ON OUR SIDE MIGHT STILL BE RELEVANT UNTIL AMBASSADOR RUSH'S RETURN O/A SEPTEMBER 1. ALTHOUGH I WOULD BE PREPARED TO MEET SRV REPRESENTATIVE PRIOR TO THAT DATE IF DEPARTMENT SO INSTRUCTS, IT MAY WISH TO CONSIDER WHETHER IT WOULD PREFER US TO BE REPRESENTED INITIALLY BY ACTING DCM.
GAMMON

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